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ABSTRACT

The study of geography should not be tedious or boring for students. There are many activities to motivate students while teaching them place location and geographical information. This document describes three activities or games that can be adapted for grades 4-8. "Mappits" requires students (individually or in teams) to determine the state or country represented in a small cut-out section of a map. "Geography Trivia" involves the use of atlases to answer questions of geographic content. Several variations of this activity are described. "Geography Baseball" is a game to help students learn place location using atlases and classroom maps. A list of European locations that can be used in the game is included. The addresses of the following institutions committed to geographic education are also provided: the American Geographical Society, the Association of American Geographers, the National Geographic Society, and the National Council for Geographic Education. (GEA)

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GEOGRAPHY ACTIVITIES

THAT MAKE LEARNING FUN

Grades 4-8

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GEOGRAPHY ACTIVITIES THAT MAKE LEARNING FUN

by Lisa Mozer

The study of geography need not be a tedious task for students. There are many activities to motivate your students while at the same time teaching them place location and geographical information. What follows are different activities or games that can be adapted for grades 4-8.

MAPPITS

Materials needed: atlas, construction paper, scissors, glue

Directions: Using an old atlas or book of maps, cut out 2"x 2" sections of maps. Then mount the map cut-outs on construction paper and laminate, if possible. Students are to guess the state or country that is being represented based on the clues given in the cut-out. This activity can be used in a learning center, as a bulletin board or as a game. To play as a game, students should be divided into two teams. One person on each team is given a Mappit. The team to guess their Mappit first earns a point. Once a team has guessed their clue, they are given a new Mappit. Play continues until all the clues are gone or everyone on the team has had a turn to play.

GEOGRAPHY TRIVIA

Materials needed: atlas for each student, trivia questions, index cards

Sample questions: Type of waterway that separates England from France

Great Lake closest to Ohio

Sea located between Greece and Turkey

Asian country north of India and south of China

Second largest state in U.S.

Largest island in the world

Directions: Make at least 25 trivia questions that could be answered using an atlas. Write each question separately on an index card. Place the answer on the other side of the card. Then choose one of the variations:

1. Divide the class into two teams. Each player should have an atlas. Answers can be given by a team as a whole or by individuals on a team. (You will need to determine how much time is allotted for a team to answer.) Play begins with Team 1 being asked one of the questions. If Team 1 correctly answers the question in the given time period, they are awarded one point. If they do not answer the question correctly, Team 2 is given an opportunity to answer. If neither team is able to correctly answer, the question is saved as a bonus question to be used at the end of the game.

   After each team has attempted to answer all of the questions, it is time for any bonus questions. The bonus questions are asked again but both teams look for the answer simultaneously and there is no time limit. The first team to answer correctly wins the point. The team with the highest total number of points is the winner.

   (Variation: Have no time limit at all. Points are awarded to the team who comes up with the answer first.)

2. Students may play individually. They take turns drawing a card from the pile and questioning each other.

3. Place one question on the board each day at the beginning of class. Students are to look for the answer as soon as they enter the room.

4. Place the questions on a bulletin board. Have students answer the questions as part of a school-wide contest.

GEOGRAPHY BASEBALL

Materials needed: atlas for each student, 4 "bases", list of geographical locations, list of teacher-made homework questions, classroom wall maps of all continents

Directions: Each student is given a list of 40-100 locations on a specified continent. Locations can be cities or geographical features. (Note: It is important that items on the list can be found in both the student atlas and on the wall map.) The students are given a specified period to learn the location of all items on their list. (One to two weeks is usually sufficient.) There are three parts to Geography Baseball: the test, the game and the field trip (optional).

1. TEST: Each student is individually tested at the wall map. The teacher randomly chooses 10 items from the list. The student has a time limit of 10 seconds to find each item on the map. A passing score is 8 out of 10. The student receives 1 point for passing the test. If a student does not pass the test, a note is sent home to be signed by the parents.

2. GAME: The day before the game is to be played, the students are divided into two teams. A team captain, timer and score-keeper are chosen for each team. The team captain writes down the list of players for his/her team and makes a batting order for the next day when the game is to be played.

   The day of the game, the classroom is arranged by laying four "bases" out in the shape of a baseball field. Students sit in their teams in the proper batting order. The chalkboard is used as a scoreboard.

   With the timer and score-keeper at the board, the first player on Team 1 comes to the wall map in the front of the room, with his/her back facing the map. The teacher randomly chooses a location from the list. The student has 5 seconds to turn around and find the location on the map. If he is successful, he can choose to go to second base. To go to second base, another location is asked from the list. To go to third base, a homework question written by the teacher is given. And to get to fourth base, or a "homerun", a location is asked that was not on the student list but is on the map. A student does not have to answer more than a first base question. If he/she misses a first, second, or homerun question, that is an out for the team. Students are not penalized for missing a homework question (this is to encourage students to try these questions). Once there are three outs or every person on the team has had a chance at bat, play switches to the other team. The team with the most runs at the end of the game is the winner and each person is awarded 1/2 point.

3. FIELD TRIP (OPTIONAL): We play the game five times during the year: North America, South America, Africa, Europe and Asia. It is tied into the curriculum whenever possible. At the end of the year, the students who have earned 5 points are entitled to go on a special field trip (non-academic such as miniature golf, roller skating, swimming, etc.). As long as students have done well on their tests, they need not be on a winning team. This provides a wonderful incentive for the students and is a nice way to end the school year. It

is possible for a student to earn 5 points with only four continents. In this case, the student must play the game but does not have to take the last test.
For those students who do not have enough points, they may take the World Test. The World Test is a combination of all the other tests. Out of five continents, 50 locations are asked and the student must get 40 out of 50 right to earn 1 point.

Resources

American Geographical Society
156 Fifth Avenue
Room 600
New York, New York 10010

Association of American Geographers
1710 16th Strret, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009

National Geographic Society
17th and M Streets, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

National Council for Geographic Education
Western Illinois University
Macomb, Illinois 61455

NAME_____ Date of Test_____
Date of Game_____

**********Geography Baseball**********

Europe

1. London
2. Dublin
3. Copenhagen
4. Stockholm
5. Helsinki
6. Warsaw
7. Paris
8. Bucharest
9. Budapest
10. Rome
11. Athens
12. Strait of Gibraltar
13. North Sea
14. Black Sea
15. Lisbon
16. Vienna
17. Prague
18. English Channel
19. Bonn
20. Bern
21. Mediterranean Sea
22. Tirane
23. Moscow
24. Carpathian Mountains
25. Amsterdam
26. Glasgow
27. Belfast
28. Berlin
29. Belgrade
30. Baltic Sea
31. Brussels
32. Danube
33. Edinburgh
34. Madrid
35. Rhine
36. Wales
37. Warsaw
38. Zurich
*39. Monaco
*40. Kiev
*41. Barcelona
*42. Aegean Sea
*43. Nice
*44. Barents Sea
*45. Bay of Biscay
*46. Ionian Sea
*47. Leningrad
*48. Munich
*49. Marseille
*50. Naples

*Not Indexed in Atlas